

About James Obielodan



State Journal/Suzanne Feliciano

Kentucky State University School of Business is launching a new master of business administration degree program this fall to help many local professionals take their education and salary to the next level. Staff Writer Molly Williamson sat down with the program's summer coordinator, James Obielodan, to find out how the program will benefit the community.

Let's talk a little bit about the program. When is the first class?

The first class will start Aug. 22. School starts Aug. 20, but that's for the weekend classes. But for the regular classes, it will be Aug. 22, 2005.

Why does Kentucky State University need an MBA program?

Consistent with the liberal arts mission of Kentucky State University, the objective of the MBA program is to provide essential knowledge and skills that can be directly utilized by business professionals in both the private and public sectors.

We have many professionals and would-be professionals in Frankfort and the Frankfort environs, or area. Many of them are state workers. Most of these would not be able to go to other places because of distance.

So the convenience of the location of the school to thousands of state workers and other professionals who want to have business professional training – we needed an MBA program. That's the primary reason for establishing the program. It is to provide business professionals the education and training they need for business professions in Frankfort and the area.

So it is mainly for people already in a business field?

Kentucky State University is a regional university. As such, the primary target of the MBA program is anyone in central Kentucky, specifically the university's six-county service area, who has a college degree and an interest in graduate studies in business administration. We anticipate that the students enrolled in the program will principally come from the pool of recent graduates from KSU, and state and local government employees, and industry employees within our service area.

However, the program will accept students from other places, including other countries such as international students. Also, the program is designed to appeal to any college graduate who do not

have a core of business courses but who are capable of working within the field represented by the MBA.

What are some of the classes or characteristics of your new program that will set you a part from other MBA programs?

The MBA program offers a flexible curriculum encompassing a rich array of core courses. The program emphasizes a solid grounding in graduate business education, combined with sufficient elective course work to provide for individual preferences and career enhancement.

Elective course work may be chosen from four business areas – accounting, marketing, management and finance – or public administration and computer science. The program offers a competitive advantage as follows: a. affordable cost, b. flexible curriculum, c. time convenience – evening and weekend classes and d. small class atmosphere.

If you look at most MBA programs around the country, for the most part, they are similar. At this point we will have a lot of similarities but our focus is to actually provide strategic business thinkers and leaders. Now that's not to say that other MBA programs are not doing that, but we are seeking to provide or to train and educate business professionals to be strategic thinkers and strategic leaders.

In the flyer we have developed, it says the MBA program will provide best business practices to develop strategic business

leaders.

How do you plan to do that?
By the kind of courses we offer and the kind of curriculum developed around those classes.

What type of courses do you offer?

We will offer managerial accounting, managerial economics, corporate finance, management information systems, human behavior in organizations, strategic management and strategic marketing management.

I can speak to the management information systems because that's my only area of expertise. Essentially, in that course I will provide real-world case scenarios for students to have real-world experience. In case studies, that will provide real-world situations for them to, as they learn the concepts, they will be able to apply these concepts in solving these types of problem *vis-a-vis* management information systems. We will also look at the use of information systems for gaining and attaining strategic advantage.

What do you mean by that?

How do you out-perform your competitors? The ways in which we use technology to gain a competitive advantage, or to get an advantage over your competitors. If you look carefully, Kmart has been having problems with market share and profitability. Wal-Mart seems to be succeeding very well. So why are Kmart stores closing around the country and Wal-Mart is building stores around the country? It is because

Wal-Mart discovered very early

Kentucky State University's latest program aims to teach students how to succeed in business by really trying to understand competitive advantage.

the potential and power of information systems to, as it were, maintain the reduced cost of inventory management. So it was able to effectively use information systems for inventory and customer relationship management. As a result of that, they are able to do business at a reduced cost, which translates to business advantage over their competitors like Kmart.

So we'll be looking at case studies that relate to how information systems will enable business to have advantage over their competitors and to be able to deliver value to their customers and maintain their profitability.

So it's not just learning what is information systems, what is hardware, what is software, but how do you use information systems to deliver value to customers, maintain reduced business costs and improve productivity?

In a nutshell, if you are saying how are we going to prepare strategic business leaders, it is in the kind courses we offer. It is in the curricula developed around those courses. So the program curricula will provide information and instruction activities, instruction learning activities that will promote strategic thinking, strategic leadership, and strategic problem solving.

Now for someone like me, who had nothing to do with business in college, what would be the advantage of taking this MBA degree program?

The advantage would be three things. One, upon the completion of the program you will have gained expertise that will increase your earning power. So this earning power, and learning to be a successful business leader. If you are an employer and you are looking for ways in which to be successful in your business, you want employees who can solve problems. So, because of the business problem-solving skills that you have been through in the program, we hope that you will be a successful business leader.

It should enable those who go through the program to be able to move up the corporate ladder. So have you reached a stage in your career that you can no longer move up, you can't grow? ... That issue translates to an increase in your earning power, it should translate into becoming a successful business leader and it should enable our graduates to be able to move up the corporate ladder.

I know you said that this program will help people who are state government workers. What is the advantage for a state worker to have an MBA?

MBA program's purpose: "It is to provide business professionals the education and training they need for business professions in Frankfort and the area."

Likely candidates: "We anticipate that the students enrolled in the program will principally come from the pool of recent graduates from KSU, and state and local government employees, and industry employees within our service area."

The curriculum: "We will offer managerial accounting, managerial economics, corporate finance, management information systems, human behavior in organizations, strategic management and strategic marketing management."

The payoff: "It should enable those who go through the program to be able to move up the corporate ladder. So have you reached a stage in your career that you can no longer move up, you can't grow? ... That issue translates to an increase in your earning power, it should translate into becoming a successful business leader and it should enable our graduates to be able to move up the corporate ladder."

State employee benefits: "State government agencies need new and innovative ways of advancing state functions and services. With the MBA program, state employees will learn the best business practices that will lead to satisfied customer services. So best business practices for achieving satisfied customer services. And, of course, for those state workers who would like to be able to move up the ladder of the agencies, if you are successful in what you are doing we would hope that you would be promoted. Now having a MBA does not necessarily mean that you are going to be promoted, but if the MBA is helping you to be effective and efficient in your duties and responsibilities, then you stand a good chance of moving up the

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Is there anything else I should know?

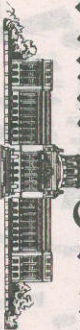
We are accepting applications for fall and spring semesters. Applications for fall and spring semesters are now being accepted until the classes are filled.

The application fee is \$22, nonrefundable.

They can call (502) 597-6708, e-mail graduatestudies@ksu.edu or they can visit www.ksu.edu/mba for additional information.

Are you excited for it to begin?

Oh, yes, very much excited. I can hardly wait for Aug. 22 to be here.



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